

1620

NFAC 5623-81

4 SEP 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

ATTENTION : Chief, Position Management and Compensation Division

VIA : Director of Finance
Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

FROM : Clarus W. Rice
Director of Central Reference

SUBJECT : Final Evaluation of Alternative Work Schedule

REFERENCE : A. Memorandum from Director of Central Reference to
Deputy Director for Administration, dated 28 February
1980, Subject: Proposal for Alternative Work
Schedule
B. Memorandum from Director of Central Reference to
Deputy Director for Administration, dated 29 June
1981, Subject: Proposal for Alternative Work
Schedule

1. From April 1980 through 10 July 1981 the document indexing unit in Europe Division, Information Services Group, Office of Central Reference experimented with an alternative work schedule (AWS). The primary responsibilities of the unit are indexing of intelligence documents for input into the OCR computerized bibliographic data base, maintenance of the data base, and providing guidance to its users. The application of an AWS to this small, relatively autonomous unit was considered successful. (The experimental schedule discussed here has since been replaced by a 5-4/9 schedule preferred by the employees involved, and implemented on 13 July 1981.)

2. Prior to the implementation of the AWS, personnel in the document indexing unit had been working a regular 40-hour, five-day week. Four employees, one GS-8, one GS-9, one GS-11 and one GS-12, participated in the experimental schedule. Each participant worked one compressed week (four 10-hour days, 0730-1800) followed by one five-day week (eight hours daily, falling within the core hours of 0830-1600), allowing for one day off every ten workdays. The combined flexible and compressed schedule provided better staffing in the unit than would have been possible under a fully compressed schedule. The work hours of the unit's two senior members were staggered to insure adequate supervisory presence.

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3. Three of the original participants in the AWS remained in the unit throughout the period of the experiment; however, one was promoted to head of the unit, replacing the participating supervisor, who transferred to a higher level position. The productivity of the two remaining employees, in terms of total number of documents and items indexed per month, increased over their monthly averages during the preceding six-month period. Their use of leave also decreased significantly during the experiment. While it is impossible to conclude that a direct causal relationship exists between the experimental schedule and productivity/leave factors, it is clear that the schedule had no detrimental effects.

4. The AWS appeared to have no particular effect on employee turnover. It is difficult to assess the effect of the AWS on unit morale because morale was good both prior to and during the experimental period. During the experiment, unit members functioned in an efficient, cooperative manner and were willing to make any personal adjustments necessary to ensure that their schedules did not adversely affect division operations. Overtime worked was in line with that of similar ISG units, all of whom share overtime when it is required.

5. Unit members did not believe that the AWS had any major negative effects in relation to transportation, family, recreational or social life. One positive effect noted during the compressed week was significantly decreased commuting times due to non-rush-hour travel. None of the unit personnel were carpool members either before or during the experiment. Unit personnel were generally pleased with the experimental schedule. All looked forward to days off and used this time to accomplish tasks at home or schedule activities such as doctor's visits or car servicing, which would normally have required them to take leave. Unit members also believed they had increased indexing productivity after 1630 (normal close of business) when there were fewer people and fewer distractions in the office.

6. Among the three members who attended after-hours classes both positive and negative aspects of the AWS were noted. One employee who scheduled her day off on her class day welcomed the opportunity for study and preparation; the other two employees who worked (sometimes ten hours) on their class days found those particular days tiring.

7. The AWS created minimal communication problems among unit personnel. Members of other components, the division and other indexing units did, however, have some difficulty in adjusting to the schedule. Although the experimental schedule was prominently posted and distributed, there was a tendency for employees on regular schedules to neglect to check the schedule when seeking contact or scheduling meetings with members of the EUR indexing unit. There were no other significant inconveniences. Time and attendance record-keeping was not a problem, and changes in the schedule were required only infrequently to ensure adequate staffing.

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8. In the particular component of OCR where the AWS was tried, there is less interaction with requesters than there is in many other OCR components, and the unit is not subject to many sharply fluctuating, short-deadline demands. There are, however, day-to-day activities that must be completed on schedule. The AWS would not have been feasible had there been fewer than four participants. The continued success of such a schedule requires the commitment of the participating individuals and their willingness to adjust personal leave plans as necessary to make the schedule workable. Provided they do so, and that adequate staffing continues, I endorse continuance of AWS options. They have allowed us to give some employees a larger voice in setting their schedules, without negative effects on their work. The 5-4/9 schedule, which replaced the schedule discussed above, will be evaluated on a continuing basis to ensure that needs of the office are met as well as they were under previous schedules.



Clarus W. Rice

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Final Evaluation of Alternative Work Schedule

FROM:

Clarus W. Rice
Director of Central Reference
2E60 Hqs

EXTENSION

NO.

1620

DATE

4 September 1981

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1. C/AG/PMES
2F42

9/9 W

2.

3. Director of NFAC
7E44

X

4.

5. Director of Finance
616 Key

9/14 (CA)

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7. Director of Personnel
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